

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2541

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF

SUBJECT: UNHCR BUDGET BANGKOK

REFERENCE: A. STATE 239028; B. STATE 238792

1. EMBASSY REFUGEE OFFICER SPOKE WITH UNHCR REGIONAL DIRECTOR CESAR BERTA ABOUT QUESTIONS RAISED REFERENCED TELEGRAMS. HE ANSWERED THAT UNHCR STILL USING ORIGINAL ESTIMATE OF \$US 12.4 MILLION EVEN THOUGH BASED ON CALCULATION OF FEWER REFUGEES THAN NOW RESIDING IN THAILAND. HE POINTED OUT THAT THIS GLOBAL FIGURE WAS ROUGH ESTIMATE ONLY. THEY HAVE NO PLAN TO REVISE GLOBAL ESTIMATE AT THIS TIME. THE ONLY FUNDS WHICH UNHCR BANGKOK HAS TRANSMITTED TO THE THAI GOVERNMENT (RTG) IS THE INITIAL \$500,000. ACCORDING TO BERTA ALL OF THESE FUNDS HAVE BEEN COMMITTED BY MINISTRY OF INTERIOR BANGKOK ALTHOUGH EXPENDITURE OF THESE FUNDS AT LOCAL LEVELS HAS BEEN SLOW. THE RTG HAS SUBMITTED ACCOUNT FOR THE DISBURSEMENT OF THESE FUNDS WHICH UNHCR BANGKOK IS FORWARDING TO GENEVA. MR. BERTA SAID THAT THEY DO NOT YET HAVE ANY HANDLE ON ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE RATE BY QUARTER BUT THAT HIS OFFICE IS IN THE MIDST OF EXERCISE TO DETERMINE AVERAGE DAILY RATE FOR CARE PER REFUGEE WHICH WILL SERVE AS UNHCR GUIDELINE IN DETERMINING WHERE AND IN WHAT AMOUNTS FUNDS SHOULD BE DISBURSED. FOR EXAMPLE, IF REFUGEE CARE IN SOUTHERN CAMPS IS 5 BAHT PER PERSON PER DAY AND IN THE NORTH, 10 BAHT PER PERSON, UNHCR WOULD USE AVERAGE OF 7.5 BAHT PER PERSON IN ARRIVING AT AMOUNT OF MONEY NEEDED TO CARE FOR CAMP OF 10,000 PERSONS WHERE-
EVER LOCATED. IN THIS WAY THEY PLAN TO PROVIDE MEASURE OF
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GENERAL SUPERVISION OVER EXPENDITURES. MR. BERTA SAID THAT HIS

OFFICE HAD NO OTHER COUNTRY CONTRIBUTION FOR THAI PROGRAM, ONLY 500,000 ALREADY PROVIDED RTG BY UNHCR. HE AFFIRMED THAT NEITHER RTG NOR UNHCR MADE ANY DISTINCTION WHATSOEVER IN TREATMENT OF VARIOUS REFUGEE NATIONALITY GROUPS IN THAILAND. UNHCR BANGKOK IS NOW PREPARING BUDGET FOR COMMITMENT OF SECOND TRANCHE \$US 1 MILLION WHICH WILL NOT BE DETAILED BUT WILL INDICATE BUDGET ITEMS UNDER BROAD HEADINGS, " FOOD, SHELTER, MISCELLANEOUS." PROVISION WILL BE MADE TO AMEND THIS AGREEMENT WITH RTG AS CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRE.

2. UNHCR HAS THREE FIELD OFFICERS LOCATED IN LARGER CAMPS, ONE IN CAMBODIAN CAMP AND OTHER TWO IN CAMPS OF MEO REFUGEES IN THE NORTH. THESE FIELD REPRESENTATIVES COVER ALL OF THE CAMPS IN THAILAND REPORTING ON CONDITIONS, NEEDS, AND PROGRESS. THEY HAVE SURVEYED ALL OF THE CAMPS. UNHCR HAS NOT YET ASSESSED TOTAL REFUGEE NEEDS IN MANNER WHICH WOULD PROVIDE DETAILED RATE OF EXPENDITURE BY QUARTER BUT THEY ARE WORKING UP PROCEDURES AND BY END OF OCTOBER THEY SHOULD HAVE MEANS FOR ESTIMATING COST OF MAINTAINING CAMP POPULATION STILL ESTIMATED AT ABOUT 55,000. THEIR PROBLEM IS MADE MORE DIFFICULT BY CONTINUING REFUGEE CAMP INCREASES. FOR EXAMPLE, CAMBODIAN REFUGEE POPULATION IN THAILAND HAS INCREASED FROM ABOUT 14,000 IN JULY TO NEARLY 20,000 BEGINNING OF OCTOBER AND MEO CAMPS IN NORTH INCREASED ABOUT 5,000 IN LAST 45 DAYS. BERTA SAID THAT AMONG LOCAL OFFICIALS THERE ARE GOVERNORS AND DISTRICT OFFICIALS WHO HAVE TAKEN INITIATIVE IN PROVIDING REFUGEE CARE EVEN BEFORE UNHCR APPEARED ON SCENE. (EMBASSY CAN CONFIRM THAT THIS IS TRUE.) IN ADDITION TO REFUGEE CAMP ACTIVITY, UNHCR RUNS TRANSIT FACILITY IN BANGKOK FOR ABOUT 150 PERSONS EMIGRATING TO VARIOUS COUNTRIES. THEY HAVE AGREED TO HANDLE AS MANY AS 25 LAO AT A TIME PROCEEDING TO U.S. IN THEIR TRANSIT CAMP AND PERHAPS MORE IF CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRE.

3. EMBASSY ASKED BERTA ABOUT UNHCR DECISION NOT TO PROVIDE FUNDS TO ICEM FOR TRAVEL LAOTIAN REFUGEES TO FRANCE. HE SAID THAT HIS OFFICE WAS PUSHING GENEVA HARD ON THIS ISSUE AS THEY KNOW OF ABOUT 200 LAOTIAN REFUGEES WHO COULD RESETTLE IN FRANCE IMMEDIATELY LACKING ONLY TRAVEL FUNDS. EMBASSY URGES USG WEIGH IN ON THIS APPEAL FOR UNHCR FUNDS TO ICEM FOR LAOTIAN REFUGEE TRAVEL TO FRANCE.

MASTERS

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